

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 ~~1. An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said~~  
2 ~~apparatus comprising:~~  
3 ~~an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a customer's~~  
4 ~~identification; and~~  
5 ~~a signal processing system responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for~~  
6 ~~storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for calculating a second~~  
7 ~~discount based on a predefined time period from signals stored in said memory indicative of a~~  
8 ~~date of a last visit of the customer to the retail establishment and a first discount.~~

1 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said input device includes a keypad.

1 3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said input device includes at least one of a scanning  
2 ~~device for scanning an encoded bar code, a magnetic storage medium, an optical storage~~  
3 ~~medium.~~

1 4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process further applies said second discount to a  
2 purchase of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount upon  
2 ~~expiration of said pre-defined time period, wherein said pre-defined begins at a pre-defined date.~~

1 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount by  
2 increasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount by  
2 decreasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is prior to said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount by  
2 decreasing said second discount to a pre-defined minimum discount if said date of said last visit  
3 is prior to said pre-defined time period.

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1 9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process updates said date of said last visit of the  
2 ~~customer with a date of a present visit of the customer to the retail establishment; and to update~~  
3 said first discount with said second discount.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said process further updates said date of said last visit  
2 if a purchase of the customer is greater than a pre-defined value

1 11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process further applies a second discount to a  
2 purchase of the customer if the purchase is greater than a pre-defined value.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process determines said second discount at a  
2 present visit of the customer to the retail establishment.

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1 13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process further accesses a date indicative of the  
2 ~~last time said first discount changed.~~

1 14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said process determines said second discount by  
2 increasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said  
3 pre-defined time period and if said date said first discount changed is prior to a second pre-  
4 defined time period.

1 15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said process further generates a coupon including said  
2 identifier.

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1 ~~16.~~ An apparatus for determining a discount for a customer, the apparatus comprising:  
2 ~~an input device for generating an identifier signal indicative of a first conditional discount~~  
3 ~~and a first date indicative of an expiration date of said first conditional discount; and~~  
4 ~~a signal processing system, responsive to said identifier signal, and having memory for~~  
5 ~~storing signals including program signals defining an executable process for calculating a first~~  
6 ~~earned discount based on a pre-defined time period from signals indicative of stored in said~~  
7 ~~memory indicative of said first conditional discount and said first date; for calculating a second~~  
8 ~~conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a pre-defined value; and for~~  
9 ~~generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second date~~  
10 ~~indicative of an expiration of said second conditional discount.~~

1 17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said process further applies said first earned discount  
2 to a purchase of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said process determines said first earned discount is  
2 equal to said first conditional discount if said first date occurs within said pre-defined time  
3 period.

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1 19. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said process determines said first earned discount is  
2 equal to said first conditional discount decreased by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs  
3 outside of said pre-defined time period.

1 20. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said process determines said first earned discount is  
2 zero discount if said first date occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

1 21. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said input device includes a scanning device for  
2 scanning an encoded bar code, a magnetic storage medium, or an optical storage medium.

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1 22. A computer encoded with computer program code for:  
2 receiving an identifier representative of the customer;  
3 accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a  
4 date of a last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount; and  
5 determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date  
6 of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period.

1 23. The computer of claim 22, the computer program code further for applying said second  
2 discount to a purchase of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 24. The computer of claim 22, wherein said second discount is a percentage discount of said  
2 purchase of the customer.

1 25. The computer of claim 22, wherein determining said second discount is performed upon  
2 the expiration of said pre-defined time period, and wherein said pre-defined time period begins at  
3 a pre-defined date.

1 26. The computer of claim 22, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 increasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 27. The computer of claim 22, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 decreasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is prior to said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 28. The computer of claim 22, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 decreasing said second discount to a pre-defined minimum discount if said date of said last visit  
3 is prior to said pre-defined time period.

1 29. The computer of claim 22, the computer program code further for:  
2 updating said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the  
3 customer to the retail establishment; and  
4 updating said first discount with said second discount.

1 30. The computer of claim 29, wherein updating said date of said last visit is performed if a  
2 purchase of the customer is greater than a pre-defined value.

1 31. The computer of claim 22, the computer program code further for applying a second  
2 discount to a purchase of the customer if the purchase is greater than a pre-defined value.

1 32. The computer of claim 22, wherein determining said second discount is performed at a  
2 present visit of the customer to the retail establishment.

1 33. The computer of claim 22, the computer program code further for performs accessing a  
2 date indicative of the last time said first discount changed.

1 34. The computer of claim 33, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 increasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said  
3 pre-defined time period and if said date said first discount changed is prior to a second pre-  
4 defined time period.

1 35. The computer of claim 22, wherein said memory is associated with said computer.

1 36. The computer of claim 22, wherein said memory is associated with a card.

1 37. The computer of claim 22, wherein said identifier comprises an encoded bar code, a  
2 magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.

1 38. The computer of claim 22, the computer program code further for generating a coupon  
2 including said identifier.

1 39. A computer encoded with computer program code for:  
2 receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date  
3 representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;  
4 determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and  
5 said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;  
6 determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a  
7 pre-defined value; and  
8 generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second  
9 date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount.

1 40. The computer of claim 39, the computer program code further for applying said first  
2 earned discount to a purchase of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 41. The computer of claim 39, wherein determining said first earned discount comprises  
2 determining said first earned discount to be equal to said first conditional discount if said first  
3 date occurs within said pre-defined time period.

1 42. The computer of claim 39, wherein determining said first earned discount comprises  
2 decreasing to said first conditional discount by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs  
3 outside of said pre-defined time period.

1 43. The computer of claim 39, wherein determining said first earned discount comprises  
2 determining said first earned discount to be zero discount if said first date occurs outside of said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 44. The computer of claim 39, wherein said first and second identifier comprises an encoded  
2 bar code, a magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.

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1 45. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for:  
2 receiving an identifier representative of the customer;  
3 accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a  
4 date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount; and  
5 determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date  
6 of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period.

1 46. The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program code further for applying said  
2 second discount to a purchase of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 47. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said second discount is a percentage discount  
2 of the purchase of the customer.

1 48. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein determining said second discount is performed  
2 upon the expiration of said pre-defined time period, wherein said pre-defined begins at a pre-  
3 defined date.

1 49. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 increasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 50. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 decreasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is prior to said  
3 pre-defined time period.

1 51. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 decreasing said second discount to a pre-defined minimum discount if said date of said last visit  
3 is prior to said pre-defined time period.

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1 52. The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program code further for:  
2 updating said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the  
3 customer to the retail establishment; and  
4 updating said first discount with said second discount.

1 53. The storage medium of claim 52, wherein updating said date of said last visit is  
2 performed if a purchase of the customer is greater than a pre-defined value.

1 54. The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program further for applying a second  
2 discount to a purchase of the customer if the purchase is greater than a pre-defined value.  
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1 55. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein determining said second discount is performed  
2 at a present visit of the customer to the retail establishment.

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1 56. The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program further for accessing a date  
2 indicative of said last time said first discount changed.

1 57. The storage medium of claim 56, wherein determining said second discount comprises  
2 increasing said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within  
3 said pre-defined time period and if said date said first discount changed is prior to a  
4 second pre-defined time period.

1 58. The storage medium of claim 45, the computer program code further for generating a  
2 coupon including said identifier.

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1 59. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said identifier comprises an encoded bar code,  
2 a magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.

1 60. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said storage medium is associated with a  
2 computer.

1 61. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said storage medium is associated with a card.

1 62. The storage medium of claim 45, in which the medium is at least one of an electronic  
2 storage medium, magnetic storage medium and optic storage medium.

1 63. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for:  
2 receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date  
3 representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;  
4 determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and  
5 said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;

6 determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a  
7 pre-defined value; and

8 generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second  
9 date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount.

1 64. The storage medium of claim 63, the computer program code further for applying said  
2 first earned discount to a purchase of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 65. The storage medium of claim 63, wherein determining said first earned discount  
2 comprises determining said first earned discount to be equal to said first conditional discount if  
3 said first date occurs within said pre-defined time period.

1 66. The storage medium of claim 63, wherein determining said first earned discount  
2 comprising decreasing to said first conditional discount by a pre-defined value if said first date  
3 occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

1 67. The storage medium of claim 63, wherein determining said first earned discount  
2 comprising determining said first earned discount to be zero discount if said first date occurs  
3 outside of said pre-defined time period.

1 68. The storage medium of claim 63, wherein said first identifier and second identifier each  
2 comprise an encoded bar code.

1 69. A method for determining a discount for a customer of a retail establishment, said  
2 method comprising:

3 receiving an identifier representative of the customer;  
4 accessing data, in response to said identifier, from memory relating to the customer, a  
5 date of the last visit of a customer to the retail establishment, and a first discount; and  
6 determining a second discount based on said first discount and a relationship of said date  
7 of said last visit of the customer and a pre-defined time period.

1 70. The method of claim 69, further comprising applying said second discount to a purchase  
2 of the customer at the retail establishment.

1 71. The method of claim 69, wherein said second discount is a percentage discount of the  
2 purchase of the customer.



1 72. The method of claim 69, wherein determining said second discount is performed upon the  
2 expiration of said pre-defined time period, wherein said pre-defined begins at a pre-defined date.

1 73. The method of claim 69, wherein determining said second discount comprises increasing  
2 said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said pre-defined  
3 time period.

1 74. The method of claim 69, wherein determining said second discount comprises decreasing  
2 said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is prior to said pre-defined  
3 time period.

1 75. The method of claim 69, wherein determining said second discount comprises decreasing  
2 said second discount to a pre-defined minimum discount if said date of said last visit is prior to  
3 said pre-defined time period.

1 ~~76. The method of claim 69, further comprising:~~  
2 ~~updating said date of said last visit of the customer with a date of a present visit of the~~  
3 ~~customer to the retail establishment; and~~  
4 ~~updating said first discount with said second discount.~~

1 77. The method of claim 76, wherein updating said date of said last visit is performed if a  
2 purchase of the customer is greater than a pre-defined value.

1 78. The method of claim 69, further comprising:  
2 applying a second discount to a purchase of the customer if the purchase is greater than a  
3 pre-defined value.

1 79. The method of claim 69, wherein determining said second discount is performed at a  
2 present visit of the customer to the retail establishment.

1 ~~80. The method of claim 69, further comprising:~~  
2 ~~accessing a date indicative of the last time said first discount changed.~~

1 81. The method of claim 80, wherein determining said second discount comprises increasing  
2 said first discount by a pre-defined value if said date of said last visit is within said pre-defined

3 time period and if said date said first discount changed is prior to a second pre-defined time  
4 period.

1 82. The method of claim 69, further including:  
2 generating a coupon including said identifier.

1 83. The method of claim 69, wherein said identifier comprises an encoded bar code, a  
2 magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.

1 84. The method of determining a discount for a customer; the method comprising:  
2 receiving a first identifier indicative of a first conditional discount and a first date  
3 representative of the expiration of said first conditional discount;  
4 determining a first earned discount in accordance with said first conditional discount and  
5 said first date occurring within a pre-defined time period;  
6 determining a second conditional discount by increasing said first earned discount by a  
7 pre-defined value; and  
8 generating a second identifier indicative of said second conditional discount and a second  
9 date representative of the expiration of said second conditional discount.

1 85. The method of claim 84, further comprising.  
2 applying said first earned discount to a purchase of the customer at the retail  
3 establishment.

1 86. The method of claim 84, wherein said first earned discount is equal to said first  
2 conditional discount if said first date occurs within said pre-defined time period.

1 87. The method of claim 84, wherein said first earned discount is equal to said first  
2 conditional discount decreased by a pre-defined value if said first date occurs outside of said pre-  
3 defined time period.

1 88. The method of claim 84, wherein said first earned discount is zero discount if said first  
2 date occurs outside of said pre-defined time period.

1 89. The method of claim 84, wherein said first and second identifier comprises an encoded  
bar code, a magnetic storage medium and an optical storage medium.